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XX.—A SOURCE OF *MUNDUS ET INFANS*.

The morality of *Mundus et Infans* exists in a print dated 1522, from Wynkyn de Worde's press, and is styled by him a 'new production.'¹ The word must be taken for what it is worth, but it should be remembered that Wynkyn was not afraid to print old works, and call them such. In his print of *Ragmannes Rolle*, Wynkyn adds an envoy attributing the faults of the poem to "Kynge Ragman holly, whiche dyde the make many yeres ago."² The printer is therefore entitled to some confidence, especially since certain internal evidence points to the same fact.

¹ Here begynneth a propre newe Interlude of the worlde and the chylde otherwyse called [Mundus et Infans] & it sheweth of the estate of chyldehode and Manhode." Colophon: "Here endeth the Interlude of Mundus & Infans. Imprynted at London in Fletestrete at the sygne of ye Sonne by me Wynkyn de worde. The yere of our Lorde M.ccccc. and xxij. The xvij daye of July." Ed. Roxburghe Club, 1877, Collier's Dodsley, vol. XII, 1827; Hazlitt's Dodsley, vol. I; Manly, *Specimens of the Pre-Shakspearean Drama*, I, 353-385.

The continual rhyming of words in *-y*, *-ye* with words in *-e* goes to show that the play must have been written later than 1450. Examples (Collier's ed., p. 318, *glorye: me: be*, p. 319, *me: lechery: be: me: enuy: company: me: be: glotonye*. Similarly the rhyme (*loc. cit.*, p. 330), *recreacyon: saluacyon: Inuersacyon: dampnacion*, points to late 15th century work. For in the early part of the century the rhyme is final, not penultimate. On p. 314, *wrought: mought* (= *môte*), shows the loss of the guttural, which is rare in the early fifteenth century. There are numerous cases of assonance, and the metre in general is of a rude type. E. K. Chambers, *Mediæval Stage*, II, 440, refers to Collier and Pollard who "assign the play to the reign of Henry VII," while Brandl thinks that "the use of the Narrenmotiv points to a date of composition not long before that of publication."

² See Collier's *Dodsley*, XII, p. 308, where the lines are quoted.

Mundus et Infans is written for the most part in rough triplets with a short link-line, *aaabcccbdddefffe*, etc. In passages of boasting and formality it becomes highly alliterative ¹ in the parts devoted to low comedy it descends to doggerel. Besides this metre is another, which appears only in the opening speech of the Child.² It is a passage in twenty-seven lines of four accents, rhyming *ababcedcd*, etc. Its presence in the play is difficult of explanation, except by a theory which I shall shortly present.

The play has not much plot, but what there is is here outlined; Mundus opens the play and announces himself as master of man. Infans, the new-born child, follows, and after a monologue describing the perils of his birth and his poverty, goes to Mundus who gives him food and clothes and names him Wanton or Daliance (1-75). Wanton plays about the stage, describes his childish play, and returning to Mundus at fourteen is given the name of Lust and Lykyng (76-117). At twenty-one (155) Mundus calls him Manhood, and counsels him to follow the Seven Kings (168-183), whom he describes, and departs (236). Manhood boasts of his triumphs until Conscience enters and tries to dissuade Manhood from the service of the Seven Kings, whom he groups under the name of Folly, and defines as the seven deadly sins (237-461). Manhood is rather wearied by Conscience's teaching, and when Folly comes to him, he finds him a boon companion, and after a play at quarter staff goes off with him to lead a wild life in London (521-720). Conscience finds Manhood, and

¹This practice, as we may guess from comparing similar lines in *Dux Moraud*, was a regular dramatic convention in early plays.

²An alternate rhyme is used elsewhere, it is true, but only as a preliminary to the tail-rhymes in triplets. This is true of the first speeches of Mundus, Conscience, Perseverance, and Age.

goes out to seek Perseverance to endoctrine Manhood (721-744). His search is successful; and when Manhood comes back a broken old man, despairing of life, mocked by his companions (745-810), Perseverance comforts him and teaches him that by repentance shrift, the five bodily and ghostly wits, the ten commandments, and the Creed he may yet enter heaven. Age has been dubbed Shame by Folly but is now to be called Repentance. The play ends with an exhortation to the audience to "take ensauple" (962-979).

In brief the essence of the story is the strife between Virtue and Vice for the soul of man, his sins in manhood and repentance in age, with the assurance of salvation. The action progresses by description rather than by presentation; at each "age" man describes himself in a long monologue. Similarly Mundus describes the sins, Conscience the virtues, Perseverance the means of salvation. Folly alone introduces us to real life, and seems to have stepped out of another world.

Leaving Folly for the moment out of account, I wish to point out a striking parallel, hitherto, I believe, unnoticed, in the *Mirror of the Periods of Man's Life or Bids of the Virtues and Vices for the Soul of Man*. The poem exists in a ms. which Dr. Furnivall places at 1430;¹ and in others of a later date. It is a highly finished and artistic production, with many good lines, and is a far more poetic work than the morality. Aside from the dates of the mss. the fact that this poem is a vision-alle-

¹ Dr. Furnivall printed the poem from Lambeth ms., 853, in E. E. T. S., 24, *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ*, pp. 58-78. Other mss. are Balliol, 354, which lacks the last 21 stanzas at the end, but adds a stanza after l. 392; and Un. Lib. Camb., Ff. 5. 48. The poem contains 656 lines.

gory of an early type would be sufficient to show that it is the earlier work of the two. The poem closely resembles the *Debate between the Body and the Soul*, one of the most striking of all mediæval poems. Like the *Debate*, it is introduced to us as a winternight's dream, just before the waking.¹ Like it again, the seer takes no part in the action, which consists of a debate, and on a theme related to man's life. The phrase "body and soul" occurs hauntingly throughout the *Mirror*, while its terror of death and the assurance of mercy are strikingly like those of the *Debate*.² Most striking of all is its metrical form, which

¹ *Debate*:

1. As I lay in a wintris nyht
 In a droukenyng bifor the
 day
 For soþ I sawe a sely syht
 A body on a bere that lay.

Mirror:

9. In a wintris nyht or I awakid
 In my slepe I dremid so
 I sawe a child al modir nakid
 And newe borne the modir fro.

² I need not quote the *Debate*; those who know it (and no one that reads it can forget it) will see the similarity of the following lines to the theme of the greater poem:

595: "My fleissche in ouerhope wolde me faite
 And into wanhope it wolde me caste
 Helle houndis berken and baite
 þe feendis writiþ my synnes faste
 And deep me waitiþ with a trippe of dissaitte
 These sixe maken me soore agaste."

Against this picture,

"God haþ mercies ynow in stoore
 For a þousand worldis þat mercie wole crie."

The poet on a winter's night sees a newborn child ready to go out into the world. The world agrees to find it till it grows old. Bodily gifts, God's commandments, the Pleasures, the seven works of mercy, the Creed, Vices and Virtues offer their services to the child. Free-Will offers, and is answered by Conscience (1-64). At seven years the Good and Wicked Angels advise the child (65-80). At fourteen (81-112) and at twenty (113-248) the Seven Virtues and Seven Vices, Reason, Lust and Conscience give their advice to

is identical with the *Debate*, being stanzaic, of 8 short lines rhyming *abababab*.

A vision-poem in which the poet overhears a dialogue, and is not himself a partaker in the action, is already half-dramatic. He is the audience, the dream his stage, the shades of his dream the characters of his play. Let us see what a morality-writer could have made of this promising material. His first task would have been to cut the number of characters. Twenty-two characters passed before the poet in a single stanza (5), and disappeared forever. The dramatic needs demand compression, and the play will gain by this a centering of interest. The chief debate in the poem is between Virtues and Vices. But on the stage our interest must be centered on man. Thus the Vices are compressed into a single character, the Fool, or Folly. The word folly, as equivalent to the seven sins, is found in the poem, together with a reference to fools.¹

the child who is now called Man. At thirty (249-304) Conscience, who has hitherto spoken only in a minor part before the contest of Virtues and Vices, now comes forward and pleads, but is disregarded by Man. At forty (305-320) Strength and Lust, at fifty (321-336) Covetousness strive for Man against Conscience. At sixty (337-424) Man, now called Age, is mocked by Youth, and as he goes nearer the grave (70 years at l. 425, 80 at l. 455, 90 at l. 486, 100 at l. 577) turns to Repentance. The Seven Deadly Sins forsake him, and Sickness comes with Despair, reproved by Conscience. Good Hope and Good Faith teach him at the last, and the Man learns that Repentance, the Commandments, the seven works of mercy and the Creed shall let him in at heaven's gate. The poem closes with an exhortation to all to choose wisely and pray to God and His Mother for grace (633-656).

¹ Poem, ll. 438 ff., Youth speaks to Age:

all þese (the gifts of health, etc.), þou hast wastide amys
From wisdom into *folies* fele.

þine hearynge and þine i;e si;te
þat þou hast wastide in *veunglory*
þi moupe to wronge a;en ri;te

It is easy with these hints, and the knowledge of such plays as *Hyckescorner*, to create Folly. Professor Brandl's allusion to the "Narrenmotiv" is quite unnecessary. There were plenty of fools in England before Brant's ship set sail.¹

In the early part of his play the child may be kept in touch with the world, and his progress in age must be marked by renewed communication. The world will introduce the child to the seven sins; Conscience, who is already their opponent in the poem, will take over the task of the Virtues. Finally, at the end of the poem Good Faith and Good Hope can be compressed into a new character to teach age how to die.

It is thus, I believe, possible to conceive how such a morality as *The World and the Child* could spring out of a poem like the *Mirror*. But without evidence of more immediate relation than that of plot, it would be unreason-

In fals oopis and foule *gloteny*
 þin hondis to robbe and to fiȝte
 þi strengþ þou wastid in *tyranny*
 þi feet in derknesse out of liȝte
 þi bewte þou wastidist in lechery.

Again:

243: "He is a *foole* þat may be wise
 In heuene comeþ no *foolis* to ȝeere
 God doop richelees *foolis* refuse
 þat kunnen no good ne noon wole lere."

Again:

81: "Thus at vii. ȝeer age childhood bigynnes,
 And folowith *folies* many foold.

¹ Herford, *Literary Relations between England and Germany in the XVI Century*, notes Lydgate's *Order of Fools*, but omits "The 51 Follies," printed in "Twenty-six Poems," E. E. T. S., E. S., 1903; "Ces sunt xxx folies," Landsdowne MS., 564, "Cinkante et dix folis," MS. Arundel 507 (Brit. Mus.); "Les xxxii Folies," Univ. Lib. Camb. MS. Gg. 1, 1, the latter by Ralph of Lynham (?); all earlier than 1500.

able to claim the poem as source. These direct parallels, however, exist, and in sufficient number. The title of the play lies ready to hand in line 17 of the poem:

“Quod þe world to þe child;”

The child is addressed in the poem as in the play as “Mi fair child” (line 52).¹ The name Folly, we have already seen, as embodiment of the seven sins, exists in the poem. Other and more striking parallels in names exist. Wanton and Daliance are not in the poem, but “Lust and Lykyng,” man’s name in youth, is there.

Poem:

Play:

309. Quod luste and liking, “make good cheere.”

131. Lust and Lykyng is my name.

35. Lust, liking & iolite.

125. Loue, Lust, Lykyng in fere.

The name “Manhood myghty” is also in the poem, by implication.

Poem:

Play (p. 330):

252. Ful of manhode and of myȝt

“I was borne manhoode moost of myght.”

160. Manhode myghty shal be thy name.

Age as a name for man is in the poem, and his last title of Repentance is given.

627. And Repentaunce my corne schal weede.

643. Bid repentaunce to merci beende.

Conscience is addressed by Manhood as “Sir Friar,”² and it is probable he was so represented in character. The author might have got this idea from the poem, where Man says:

¹ Poem, 52: Mi fair child what hast þou þouȝt.

Play, 60: But my fayre child what woldest thou haue.

² Lines 401, 409, 715.

287. "Now good Conscience & þou wolt preche
Goo stele an abite & bicomme a frere."

The play at quarter-staff between Folly and Man in the morality might have been suggested by Lust's speech in the poem (Lust here is Man):

91. "Harpe and giterne þere may y leere¹
And pickid staffe & buckelere þere-wip to plawe."

Folly says in the play, l. 540, "A coryous bukler-player I am," while the reference to "longe or shorte," l. 549, shows that staff-play is referred to.

The general parallels in two such works, where the plot is similar, are of course numerous. Two such may be quoted.

Poem, Man says:	Play:
249. In þritti ȝeer now y abide In discrecioun yhaue in-siȝt Loueli to goo and to ride Fulof manhode and of myȝt.	315. Lo syrs I am a prynce peryl- lous yprovyde
207. Myn Iȝen ben cleere & briȝt as glas Mi lire as lillye and roose of hewe Of schappe & strengþe alle folke I passe And euere my uertu wexiþ newe.	316. I am worthyand wyght wythy and wise 315. Myne eyen do shyne as lan- tern bryght I am a creature comely out of care Emperours and kynges they knele to my kne
	p. 312. I am as fresshe as flourys in maye.
Poem:	Play:
255. Quod man in scorn "lo con- science looþ chide For losse of catel he dar not fiȝt."	719. "I wyll go whyder me lest For thou canst nought elles but chide."
303. "Goo, Conscience, þou lew- ide asse I kepe not þi maneris to sue."	710. "Conscience counseylleth me to all sadnes. Ye, to muche sadnes myght brynge me into madnes.

¹At Oxenforde, whither Reasoun has advised him to go to study law.

Poem :

283. And y dide as þou doist me
 teche
 I schulde neuer make myrie
 chere.

Play :

A closer parallel is the answer of Conscience later on in the poem :

Poem :

548. "If a man haue synned
 longe bfore
 And axe mercy and amende
 his wys
 Repente and wilne to synne
 no more
 Of þat man god gladder is
 þan of a child synlees y-
 bore.
 541. Of such a man god is moore
 gladde
 þan of a child þat neuere
 dide synne.

Play :

862. For thoughe a man had do
 alone
 The deedly synnes euerychone
 And he with contricyon make
 his mone
 To cryst our heven kynge
 God is also gladde of hym
 As of the creature that neuer
 dyde syn.

Equally close is the advice to the child in the poem to the child's boast in the play.

Poem :

77. Quod þe wickid aungil,
 "while þou art a child
 with þi tunge on folk þou
 bleere
 Course of kynde is for þouþe
 to be wilde
 To beete alle children and do
 hem deerre."
 71. þe wickid aungil bad him
 be boold
 To calle þope fadir & modir
 schrewis

Play :

79. I can with my scorge stycke
 My felow upon the heed hytte
 and lyghtly from hym make
 a skyppe
 And blere on hym my tonge.
 88. If fader or mother wyll me
 smyte
 I wyll wrynge with my lyppe
 And lyghtly from hym make a
 skyppe
 And call my dame shrewe.

Conscience's opening speech is alike in both.

Poem:

57. For my name is Conscience
To knowe me þou must bi-
gynne

Play:

298. Methynke it is a nessarye
thyng
Poore Conseyence for to
knowe.
301. For Conseyence clere it is
my name.

But by far the closest parallel, and one which argues more strongly for direct borrowing than any other, is the passage in alternate rhyme, of which I have spoken. This is the Child's opening speech, and the verbal identities with the same speech in the poem are too numerous to be passed over as an accidental coincidence in following the same source. I believe that the *Mirror* is here at least the direct source of the play, and that the alternate rhyme is due to imitation of the alternate rhyme in the poem. The identity of rhyming words deserves particular attention.

Poem:

1. How mankynde doop begynne

3. In game he ys getyn in synne
 (Balliol text)
4. þe child is þe modris deedli
 foo
 Or þei be fulli partide on
 tweyne
 In perelle of deed ben boþe
 two.
7. Pore he come þe world with-
 ynne.
25. Quod þe child "I come pore
 þe world withinne.
11. I saw a child modir nakid.
27. Nakid out of þe wyket of
 synne
 Of þe perellis of streite pas-
 sage
 To seke deep I dide begynne
 þat ilke dredful pilgrymage

Play:

29. How mankynde doth begynne.
31. Goten in game and in grete
 synne.
42. Full oft of dethe she was
 adred
 Whan that I sholde parte her
 from.
34. Whan I was rype from her to
 founde
 In peryll of dethe we stode
 bothe two.
44. Now into the worlde she hathe
 me sent
 Poore and naked as ye may se
 I am not worthely wrapped
 nor went
 But powerly prycked in pou-
 erte.
36. Now to seke dethe I must begyn
 For to passe that strayte pas-
 sage;

Poem :

Mi body & soule to parte a
tweyne
To make a deuourse of þat
mariage

Play :

For body and soule that shall
then twynne
And make a partyng of that
maryage.

The world speaks :

19. þou schuldist deie for hun-
ger and colde
But y lente meete and clope
to þee
I wole þee fynde til þou be
oolde
How wolt þou quyte it me?"

61. *Infans*: Syr, I you craue meete
and clothe my lyfe to saue.
65. *Mundus*: "I wyll the fynde
whyle thou art yinge
So thou wylt be obedyent to
my byddyng."

The *Mirror of Man's Life* is then to be regarded as a valuable link between the mediæval vision and the early morality, since direct connection appears to be proved between it and *Mundus et Infans*. The plots of poem and play are not so different but that every variation of the play can be explained as the result of the dramatic needs. The title of the piece, most of the names of the *dramatis personæ*, and numerous passages could have been borrowed from the poem, while a certain passage in alternate rhyme is so close to the similar passage of the poem as to justify the theory of direct borrowing. On the other hand, a full consideration of the points in which the play differs from the poem would be most instructive for a knowledge of the stagecraft of the moralities. But such a study is outside the limits of this paper.¹

HENRY NOBLE MACCRACKEN.

¹ I should like to call attention to some verses on the seven ages of man, in B. M. Adds. 37049, 28b-29a, as yet, I believe, unprinted. Under a picture of each "act," representing man, his good angel, and the fiend, is given 8 lines of dialogue, somewhat recalling parts of the *Mirror*.